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THE  
CHURCHILIA D:

OR, A FEW

MODEST QUESTIONS

PROPOSED TO THE

Reverend AUTHOR of the ROSCIAD.

Curst be the Verse how well foe'er it flow,  
That tends to make one worthy Man my Foe;  
Give Virtue Scandal, Innocence a Fear,  
Or from the soft-ey'd Virgin draw a Tear:  
A Lash like mine, no honest Man shall dread,  
But ev'ry *dirty Rascal* in his Stead.

POPE.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. WILLIAMS, on Ludgate Hill; and T. LEWIS, in *Russel-Street*,  
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[ Price One Shilling and Six-pence. ]

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# THE CHURCHILL

OF A NEW

## MODEST QUESTIONS



Revised Author of the ROSCIAR

Could be the Verse how well I know  
 That tends to make one worthy Man my foe;  
 Give Verse some credit, Innocence a fear,  
 Or least the folly'd Virgin draw a tear:  
 A little more, no longer than I shall dwell,  
 But only say a Word in this small

Page

L O N D O N


Printed for J. Widdowes, at the Golden Ball, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, near St. Dunstons Church, in the County of Middlesex.  
 [Price One Shilling and Six-pence]





T O T H E  
Respective and respectable GREEN-ROOMS.

GENTLEMEN and LADIES,

“  F you suspect me, I will leave the room.”  
Or if I flatter, spit in my face, and call  
me Churchill. You may believe me, when  
I declare this shall be a dedication upon an entire  
new plan; that I intend to substitute honesty for  
panegyric, and candour for praise. So much premised;  
I shall proceed.---That you had fathers and mothers, I  
verily believe; but who they were, they can give the  
best account of: that you have merit, I appeal to the  
town; they never would have been so often pleased,  
and given so much applause, if you had not deserved  
some.---So far for genealogy and descent.---So much for  
your deservings.---You are the only people who can be  
your own heralds: so if you wanted my praise, you  
might.---I court no Patron; I claim no reward; I ask

no profit; I am well paid in the reflection of endeavouring to defend your cause against this invader of your bread and cheese; this pretender to criticism.---To myself, I resemble one of those hardy gentlemen who lived one, two, or three thousand years ago; it does not signify which, for I don't intend to quarrel about an odd thousand or so.---Let us conclude, if they did exist, it was at some time:---and so much granted, it matters not at what period for my purpose: but they were then known by the name of knight-errants; fellows who used to go round the country slaying of giants and monsters, necromancers, and roaring bulls; tearing down brazen castles, or swimming thro' a thousand muddy moats in one night: and all this with as much ease, (though not altogether that stomach and satisfaction) as a fat curate would storm the out-works of my Lord's venison pasty.---And now suppose me one of these thrice-hardy gentlemen, armed at all points; my pen a lance, my breast-plate half a quire of paper, and my head fortified with its natural brass.---A whimsical imp!---the printer's devil,

gentle-



gentlemen and ladies, who is waiting for this dedication, takes the liberty to look over my shoulder. Now this, without any breach of decorum, may be allow'd; for we very often take the liberty to leave the spelling and pointing of a whole piece to these *Midwives of the muses*, as Mr. Foote calls them. I indulged the devil; and when I came thus far, my familiar stopt me short, put on a grave face, and told me he had ever an enterprising genius for such *like adventures*, and humbly begged leave to accompany me as my 'squire. I surveyed him from head to heel with a look of infinite satisfaction, and giving the assenting nod, dubbed him accordingly. He pleads himself duly qualified, by having an universal knowledge in language and science; by having had an opportunity of reading the first page of every new performance that has been brought forth in his press; (which, by the bye, is generally more to the purpose than the whole volume besides) and pleads as further merits, that before he came there, his day was employed in pounding in a drug-gift's mortar, and his evening in ringing the litter-bell,

and

and so can serve me indifferently for surgeon and post-boy: just the crown of his head is covered with a woollen night-cap, that three months ago was red; but as it was now situated, head and all might very well be taken for one of his master's black balls. His Sir John Falstaff's shirt was carefully rolled up about his arms, which were curiously striped with ink; and as a badge of his avocation not to be mistaken, he wore a dirty play-bill for an apron: a figure, though neither foreign nor antique, yet it was *outré* enough to have made its appearance in the most fashionable assembly; but, to his misfortune, and mine, he is only known in the world of letters.

For want of a natural horse, I have told my valiant attendant, that I intend to hire Pegasus; but the arch dog said, I had never feed the stableman. He says, he does not remember to have once tasted of my generosity; for he has the honour now and then to rub down that common hackney's heels. But I tell him I will, when my second edition comes out, which, when I have amended, revised,



vifed, and cut out half, is to be Two ſhillings. I bid him not fear of ſucceſs; it cannot fail, when an hungry poet is the knight, and has the devil for his 'ſquire. The worthy gentlemen of old were mere trifles: What was the ſlaying of a fiery dragon, the breaking the ſpells of a magican, or burſting open a hundred brazen gates to releaſe a beauteous *young* damſel, who had been immured ſome fifty or ſixty years? What was the butchering of a bull or two in a tournament, or overthrowing of a hundred knights, for the ſake of having a dirty glove ſtuck in the corner of their helmet? Dare they one of them have engaged a critic? Dare they, pen in hand, have encountered one of theſe gentlemen at their own weapons, and ſtood ſnarl for ſnarl with them? Methinks I hear my good genius cry out, Adventurous young man deſiſt! forego thy purpoſe, leſt by your overthrow thou bringeſt an indelible diſgrace on the cauſe you would defend!---Go, preach thy advice to roaring winds! I ſee the danger of the attempt;---I feel the glory of the conqueſt;---and I muſt on;---'tis my firſt combat.---

How

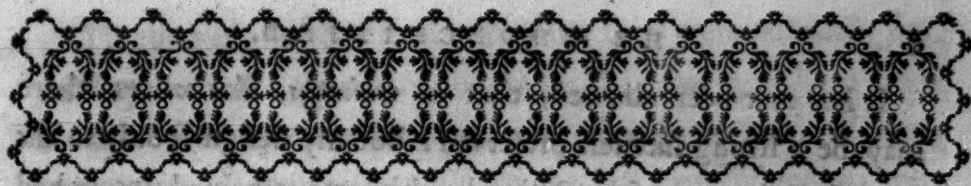
How well I shall acquit myself, do you the judges bear a wary eye.

I must now beg Mr. Sparks and Mr. Havard to be masters of the ceremony, and introduce me with my ablest respects to your seminaries of learning, wit and humour; and if I conquer now, desire I may be employed again as their champion.---*Farewell,---remember me---*



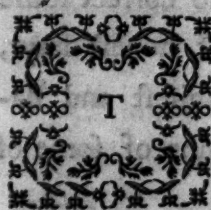
**T H E**





T H E  
CHURCHILIAD, &c.

Dear Doctor,



HOUGH unknown, (and desiring to remain so)  
I have taken the liberty of directing this little  
piece to you; begging your opinion of the cha-  
racter that is drawn in the following pages: and  
if you should happen to know the face that is  
represented, desire you would not be offended at the *Glass*.

Pray, would it not be highly diverting, to see a lady in a  
painter's shop, asking her confidant, if she did not think every  
Venus there had some resemblance of herself? And how should  
we laugh at finding a very deformed man in the same circum-  
stances, threatening to kick the painter, because he had happily  
excelled on some subject that bore a similitude to his misfortune?

B

It

It has ever been allowed, that in *writings*, like *colours*, there may be a strong likeness preserved: but my design is only to ask your thoughts on a subject that has hitherto remained untouched by any of the painters, ancient or modern; though the *poets* have been pretty particular on it; that is, *the human heart*: but I shall confine myself to black and white: and while we acknowledge painting and poetry to be sister muses, we must own they have rarely produced the same effects.

The end in general proposed by the painters, is only to delight the eye, by giving us some finished representation of nature, without ever troubling their *heads* about the instruction of the *heart*: but the grand design of every author, you know, Sir, ought to be to convey some *moral instruction*, to correct some *error*, to amend some *fault*; or, with the rod of honest satyr, to lash some *vice*, which may carry most manifest and flagrant appearances in its tendency, to the subversion of some of the valuable rules of society.

You will own these are subjects that every author ought to employ his time and pen on: Mr. Addison, and Sir Richard Steele, the great masters in polite letters, thought this absolutely necessary, and happily found the way of conveying the most useful *admonitions* in the most entertaining *methods*: they knew how to correct a vice without wounding the possessor.

'Tis



'Tis allowed, in theatrical criticisms, they were *minutely just*; yet they were the friends of the stage: they saw how hard a task it was to be a great actor; and therefore took hold of every opportunity of giving due praise to the first dawn of genius; were still endeavouring to find out merit, and overlook every fault that was not too glaring; and even there, they chastised with a loving father's hand, whose only intention was to instruct and to convey a useful lesson to his availing child.

Their admonitions were so kind, so tender, and so delicate, that the person spoke of could not help smiling, in *thanks*, under the rod of *correction*: in short, by being men of real genius, they were fond of encouraging it, and willing to be pleased.—Nor can reading furnish us with one example, where the true genius has not had one of these points in view; meeting in the common centre for the benefit of society.

Certainly to place *virtue* in a pleasing light, or to strip *vice* of all disguise or ornament, is what we most expect from those, who are either to *reform* us by *example*, or *instruct* us by *precept*.

But will not an author who forsakes this honest beaten path, to stray widely into rancour, bear the simile we may meet with on a pack of puzzling cards, *that a satyrish, lashing harmless follies, is like a puppy catching flies?*

Now deal ingenuously with me; What would you think of such a man as the author of the *Rosciad* for an example? You must

acknowledge him blest with political talents : but when you see him straying widely from every moral design, would not you believe him to be one from that very nation, *you* so celebrated for intrepidity of face ?

*' Whom his own cloyed country had vomited forth to desperate adventures ?'*

But I must plead *your* excuse for *me*, and beg her worthy sons to take me right; for I declare I would not condemn a *nation* for the *rascal-few*. But if he was not, pray might he not very easily be taken for one of the most malevolent spirits, that ever was cruelly banished from his native land ?

But to leave his country, and go on with my design :

I shall now, with all submission, ask, How far you would think such an author culpable in the general ? And shall be glad of your opinion, of a clergyman, who could break through the first law of christianity, *Do as you would be done by* : and a member of society who would endeavour to be most dangerous, in putting us in the way of finding faults, with what tends to make us most happy ? I believe no man would thank him for convincing him he is not, or ought not to be satisfied. And what would be your opinion of an author who has thus vilely erred ? For who that was not possessed of the largest share of confidence (not to make use of a harder term) would dare to feist his opinion on the world with an *ipse dixit*, as sterling criticism !

He



He certainly would have a right to judge for himself; *that is, when he did not go into the house with an order*; but none to fix it as the standard of judgment.

Would not you blame any man who would endeavour to raise his first trophy in fame, by making a body of men his enemies? And would it not be better for him if we could say with the poet,

“*That at the best the whole piece was most musically dull?*”

That it was inoffensive and insipid, and that it had no other merit, but that it did no harm.

Suppose yourself criticizing on such another piece: you must allow that some parts are easy and flowing; but you must acknowledge too that there are others, that are as mere *prose run mad*, as ever dropped from the pen of an unhappy son of Grubstreet; whose only perfection consists in *scurrility* for *character*, *abuse* for *wit*, and *puns* for *sentiments*.—You shall see, doctor, that we will prove all this.

Should we not pay a compliment (which we by no means intend) to suppose one man author of the whole piece? Pray, does there not an apparent disparity in the stile and harmony of the verse strike you? I am sure there does me;—And do not you join with me in believing (notwithstanding a late publick attestation) that there were two other gentlemen concerned, who were at least equal to the author, in *integrity* and *goodness* of heart?

And

And was it not right, to shrowd their own *softness of disposition*, and tender respects of *brotherly love*, behind the bulwark of his *athletick shoulders*, and his face of *brass*?

Were not you told, I think I was, that the gentleman that is so celebrated in the first part of the *Rosciad*, and who hereafter shall be known by the name of *Sir Flog'em Birch*; after having received several obligations from the gentlemen of the Theatre, spoke contemptuously of the profession, and meanly of the professors, was called to an account for it by a member of that body, who here stood forth the Cause's doughty knight, and threatened to make him his *foot-ball*? At the same time whispering something odly about *slitting of noses*, and *cutting off ears*; which the other (*who never was used to any other weapon of cruelty besides a rod*) in the meekness of his spirit patiently bore, 'And shew'd himself a gentleman by stealing out of his company,' and contenting himself with *taking every thing a man should not take*!

As for the third *Being*, he was convinced of the justice of Mr. Foote's satyr, in a little piece, where he exhibited Three New Performers, with wooden *bodies* as well as *heads*;

*Sat bravely down, and wept in anguish base;*

*While from his envious eye the trickling tear*

*Stole all a-down his cheek, in current vile.*

Ah!



Ah! he is young! *How little does he know of the Old Baily?*  
*But time works wonders!*

Now these gentlemen, *Sir Flog'em Birch and Co.* not content with breaking all the ties of society, but must even add violation of friendship; and taking the advantage of mistaken confidence, *Sir Flog'em*, through a cruel intervention of fortune, being rendered incapable of nightly paying for his seat in the house, most generously had the liberty of it bestowed on him: where he had an opportunity of entering into those theatrical secrets he would otherwise have remained a stranger to; and came at those anecdotes, that have assisted him in carrying on this grand work against themselves.

Mr. Codicil was fortunate enough to have a most vile play finely acted, and so acquired a visible means of existing another year; which before, the law did not make so eligible; nor would it have been altogether convenient to have made an answer to an impertinent writ of enquiry, had one been issued out.

And now, my dear Sir, if you know any friend of yours, they call the Clumsy Curate, they say he was obliged to raise a speedy sum of money to discharge a good-natured creditor, who had agreed to take about a fifth for the whole debt; that he opened a subscription, and applied to the holy fraternity, but was rejected.—No doubt they had their *reason*,—as they *knew* their *man*. For I will not doubt their charity to a *brother in distress*, who are always so ready to relieve the *necessities* of the *indigent*.

*gent.*—Nor was it his *fault*, if he was afterwards beholden to a certain Meeting for their collecting a sum, where one of the men that is most abused, generously threw in his mite to prevent his lying in *durance vile*.

From what has been said, you, and every impartial man, at one view, will see the laws of hospitality broke, and mutual confidence sacrificed to private gain: the One, owing almost his existence; the Other, a warm, tender and useful friendship, to the man whose people they would ruin in their *publick characters*, and *private reputations*.

In short, they would throw a deeper shade on every one else, to clap a daub of gilding upon him, which may dazzle, but can give no lustre. Nay; have we not great reason to suspect the truth of that drawing, that requires such colouring to give it any claim to merit?

Indeed we may with justice allow their Roscius greater merit than any performer *we* have ever seen; nor can his reputation reap any advantage from the pens of men, whose characters are so very doubtful.

Don't you wish with me, that for their own sakes they had found one fault with him? Or that you and I had him in a shew-glass, and the Triumvirate were to be our *mouth-pieces*.

*Walk*



*Walk in here ladies and gentlemen, here is the faultless monster that the world never saw!*

Now here candidly give me your opinion? What would you say to any worthy gentleman in black, who could leave his profession as minister of God, to enter into a most foul scheme of *detraction*?—But how can we expect that the laws from man to man should remain inviolate by him, who would burst through all that's *moral* and *divine*!—Who would build a reputation on the ruin of any deserving man!—Who would call *calumny*, with her *gangreening tongue*, to fester the name of *merit*!—Whose heart, blackening at the prosperity of rising genius, and fainting at the just praise bestowed upon real worth, would endeavour, under the sanction of the critic, to stop its progress; and wound, by *subterfuges*, those characters they dare not, in defiance of the town, openly attack, but carry deadly wounds in every *if* and *but*!

How would he like to have an ill report propagated, when a gathering is making round the parish for his afternoon's lecture? And yet he would take the advantage of the very time of their benefits!

Would you not believe him to be one of those who care not whose welfare they endanger—what connexions they break—whose means of living they destroy, so they can raise the least emolument for themselves?—Would ruin him in the opinion

of the world, whose publick reputation is the only maintenance for himself, a tender wife, and helpless infants!—Who, to gratify a rancorous heart, and a malevolent disposition, would take away the support of families, and the character of individuals; and all under the false pretence of settling right the misled judgment of the town!—But in reality, you know, is only to arrogate an insolent praise to themselves.

Ay! but methinks I hear you answer me to all this, in defence of the author, that had it been panygeric, the good natured town would never have bought it; *and eat he must, and speedily too*; for he finds himself possess'd of all those whorson appetites that a cardinal could boast of: and if urged on by a keen stomach, and no victuals; a maw this moment gasping for bread, the next for praise;—if, I say, to satisfy the calls of nature, he published his *Rosciad*, I must leave the world to judge how far he was guilty?

Ay, very true doctor, now here I agree in opinion with you, and wish that the *capon eating* sons of tragedy, could engage to invite him daily to a good dinner; so that, agreeable to the vulgar adage, his meat might stop his mouth.

Do not you think we should be infinitely obliged to such an author, if he could supply us with a scheme to provide better performers? But, till he does that, I'm sure you must join with  
me



me, in wishing he would give us leave to be pleased with those we have. Pray does he not to you resemble a child refusing his bread and butter, because it has no glass windows on it?

Pray, Sir, don't you think he might have been better employed? Or, if he needs must set up for a reformer, Why does he not begin within the pale of his own tribe? *You* are conscious there can be no want of subject, where there are so many *little round fat oily men of God* (as Thompson says) breeding a famine wherever they come, raising of tyths, and dues, and racking of tenants, that they may add another bottle and bird to their table; and who are as professedly fond of every thing that is luxurious, as an alderman of custard.—And when you meet with such a character as this; pray are not you of opinion, that, when Moses said, that God created nothing in vain; he never dreamt of a pampered priest?

Now here is a large field for such an author's satiric talents; but it may be dangerous to meddle there, because they can be enemies.—But you must see with me, that such a character must bespeak him a fashionable man: is it not plain, by his undertaking to rectify our amusements, before he chose to amend our morals? The scheme is truly laudable; for who shall dare to blame him, tho' he did let two bodies wait in the church some few hours for him to read the burial service?—Was he not more materially employed in the orchestra of Drury-Lane theatre, tak-

ing minutes of Mr. Sheridan's three steps, backward and forward, in king John? What was it to the deceased to lie in a melancholy church, or the mourning friends to wait all bathed in tears, and sinking under the reflection of each moment taking the last farewell of all they held most dear!—He was then all wrapt in criticism, correcting the *little errors* of the *stage*—Let the tender widow suffer a thousand deaths, each time she gazes on the coffin, in surviving the loss of what had been her only joy, her only comfort. What felt mankind for the helpless orphan who wept in bitter anguish for a dead father, who was its only support!—Was he not then gloriously convincing the town that they had been wrong, that they had been blockheads enough to give applause where none was due? And what could it signify to the dead to be buried by a French protestant, who could not read a word of English? Was not he lowering the insolent pride of a set of people, who had the impudence to dine upon *fish* and *fowls* in a superb *apartment*, while he was forced to dart into a cellar in St. Giles's, where the knives and forks are chained to the table, for fear the company should steal them, and there dine voluptuously upon *ox-cheek*? O, shame! shame! the rascals should be scourged. Shall we not join our forces and assist him? Who would not assist in so *praise worthy* an undertaking?—What is the destroying of the welfare of an *individual*, in consideration of making a minute regulation in one *fashionable pleasure*? This is necessary, and I now find in the chain of things, that a modern



modern *beau* is a very useful insect, not less so than his *reverence*, with this difference, that he is a butterfly, and the other a drone.

He can with equal accuracy criticise on a cap, or a patch, as such an author upon players; ay, and in some measure he is like him, a creature to be avoided. For who would herd with one that he is in perpetual apprehensions of being made uneasy from? How often have we both seen a fair lady ready to faint away, when one of these impertinents has found fault with the formation of *Ruffle*? The beautiful face that just before sparkled with pleasure, through the conscious satisfaction of being dressed in exact taste, was now become as disagreeable and sullen as his own, when he has gone without his dinner, and almost as much distorted as when

*'Thou grin'st horrible, a ghastly smile,'* as Milton has it.

Don't you think we might proceed infinitely farther, and continue to treat him with an Olio of his own cooking? But that it may be demanded of me to shew cause why, and what are my reasons that I have taken up the pen in opposition to him?

I shall now throw myself upon thy judgment, and that of every man of candour; and shall go on to prove how far such an author's pretensions may be just to the character he would assume? How far a clergyman has a right to be a critic? And how far, as a man, he is one, I shall endeavour to bring down reasons from religion, nature, and reading, to support my opinion, and destroy every

every claim of his; and I hope I shall have the concurrence of yours.

But, first, as it may not be unnecessary to define what a critic is, I will begin with shewing what he is not.—We have ever annexed to critic, the idea of a sour morose man, only happy in finding fault; whose chief pleasure consists in exposing the *errors of mankind*; and one who arrogates great praise to himself, in being the first to forsake *good nature*; whose greedy eye is impatiently upon the search for failings, and whose mouth is for ever open to abuse: thus has spleen often been imposed upon us for judgment; *rancour* has been taken for *knowledge*; and *virulence* for *wisdom*; and thus has a man often writ himself into the character of a *critic*, merely by being *pleas'd* to be out of humour.

But there are another kind of fools who have greatly the advantage of them; and they are the men who acquire a reputation for sense, only because they hold their tongues.

Now, the true critic is just the reverse of this: we are to suppose the able censurer, a man whose knowledge is confirm'd by a steady observation on men, books, and things; that he is well grounded in the minutia of science. The glaring beauties, and the obvious faults, are what will strike the most unlettered apprehension; but he is to find out the *latent perfections*, and more *obscure errors*; he is to dive into the very soul of the object, and



and to bring to light every thing that may *please*, every thing that may *disgust*; he is to give us a true account, with reason to support his opinion, and to draw a minute ballance between *perfection* and *imperfection*; and which ever is the most prevalent, is to stamp its reputation. His decision is to stand as the *criterion*, the *test* of *approbation* or *dislike*. I believe we understand by the word *criterion*, the nicest determination of the *soundest judgment*. Now certain it is, you know, Doctor, that spleen or rancour can make no part in the composition of the *true* critic, will, I fancy, be a consequence immediately drawn down from the above *premises*.

The *Spectators*, who have most delicately handled this subject, declare, that so far from ill nature's making any part of the critic, that it is the direct contrary; that there should be a willingness to hide the little errors we are born to, knowing man to be the child of frailty, and being ever conscious that there is no such thing as *infallibility*; were proud to establish that as the first in *perfection*, whose merits only ballanced its mistakes.

Now let us examine, according to my proposed plan, what right such an author as the author of the *Rosciad* has to be a critic? You know, Sir, we must first consider him as a clergyman; and as such, 'tis doubtless his duty to amend all our *vices*; but then you must agree with me, that it is equally so to give due praise to our deservings; and though you know, we would not wish to see one of his cloth countenance licentious follies, he should

by

by no means hurt us in our innocent, diverting, and instructive amusements. He must certainly know that a decent conformity to these harmless customs of the country where we live, is no inconsiderable part of our duty. We are sure it never can be the business of the divine to wound any one's reputation publicly, though privately it may be his duty to admonish: to call one back when he is widely straying, is what he ought to do; but should never endeavour to reclaim by making him a public spectacle of ridicule; and I am certain you must acknowledge with me, that to see one of his cloth playing the *snarling* critic, is against all decorum; morality cries loudly out against him, christianity disclaims him; and the love from man to man shuts him out from every social benefit, who can be found guilty of hurting a harmless brother in so barbarous a manner? Shall he stand candidate for reputation, who has no other merit but that of destroying another's fame? If we could detest the man who acts thus, how must we look on a spiritual guide and a minister of faith?

I am told the Doctor has lately published his reasons for printing the Rosciad, wherein he asks the question, Has not a clergyman eyes, ears, &c. and has he not a right to judge for himself, and utter his criticisms to the world? Why, yes, there is no doubt of it; but then the man should not forget the robes; he should be tender of the reputation of others, and dispossessed of rancour himself. If I don't forget, Shakespear gives some such reasons to his Jew, where we hear him cry out to this purpose;



pose; "*hath not a Jew eyes, ears, passions, affections? &c. If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you prick us, do we not bleed? and if you wound us, shall we not revenge?*" Now this is a character actuated by principle; for the man, imagining himself to have sustained a very material injury from the hand of a robber, and an enemy, flies out into the passion the author has so exquisitely painted; but you could have suffered no such damage, having never been offended: had they wounded you, then you might have had some reason for scourging them; had any one of them infringed on your property or province, there's no one but would have seen some justice in ushering into the world criticisms to their disadvantage, and might have proceeded from the same motive as Shylock's anger, *revenge*; which, tho' a bad reason, would have been better than none, if a *clergyman* ought ever to proceed upon principles of *revenge*; but I believe the generality of the world will join with me in opinion, that passion should never be the incentive of religious zeal: and how must it appear without one motive to justify such a treatment? for here you give them no quarter. Would not one imagine they were your intimate friends and acquaintance, by your using them so *sans ceremonie*? for you have given us but poor proofs of your good breeding.—When a man sets up for a critic on public characters and persons, who have been received with some reputation, he ought by all means to find out some merits; as the world could never be so far mistaken as always to give a man applause who never deserved any: now here you condemn in the

D

gross;

gross; and faith it is a very gross method of condemning: in my mind, this is but a very indifferent compliment to the rest of your brother critics, who have been already pleased with these performers. Each of these has a right to imagine himself possess'd of an equal share of knowledge and understanding with yourself; and I believe they will be of opinion that the imagination is not built upon false grounds; for it is a consequence that might very easily happen without any gift supernatural; for I will venture to affirm, any man would make as good a critic as you, who had only *read* the dramatic authors, though he had never seen a play *performed*: all his business would be only to rail hard, and condemn without exception: and he most certainly would be excellent if he had any turn for what they call humour, which generally ends in scurrility.

You may with justice urge, as you have the organs, passions, and *fits*, of this kind of humour in great abundance, appertaining to mere men, you have a right to make use of them; but, as a clergyman, you ought to judge with *candour* instead of *rancour*; for we must suppose you have arrived at the happy art of correcting your *passions*, and looser fallies of the soul; that you would never condemn without assigning a reason, nor ever find fault without cause. Now here you give us no other reason, but that it is your *reverence's* high will and pleasure to be angry: you must be conscious that even then it should rather be a kind of lesson of instruction to advise, than a sword of persecution to destroy;



stroy; as the old adage has it, you should rather choose to bring them to the *school* of repentance than the *post* of correction.

As one great proof of this, we need only look into the canon laws of a certain neighbour church, where we shall immediately be convinced of the truth of this argument, by observing the progress they make in the human heart, from proceeding upon principles of terror; where religion wears a harlequin's coat, and is ill served, because served through fear: and it is not clear to me, but in this you follow her methods, by endeavouring to enforce all your dictates with the scourge; and since you have no good qualities to make them *love* you, you are resolved to use all your power to make them *fear* you; but hope you expect, (notwithstanding your natural strength, or the art you may have acquired in the school of Broughton,) when you strike any man, to be knocked down; for in such a case, I hope, there is not one who wears a coat, waistcoat, and breeches, that would let you shrink behind the sanction of your gown; but would, as our old friend John Dryden has it, "*make you walk in querpo like a cas'd rabbit, without your holy fur, that we might for once see the inside of a churchman turned satyrish, and, if possible, find out what he was good for.*"—Now here, Doctor, I must leave you to decide for yourself, how well any man, possess'd of such a character, must have acted in conformity to the robes he wears, while I proceed, and endeavour to point the particular errors that immediately appertain to the piece.

D 2.

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It would be a work of endless trouble to go through it line by line; besides, it would be anticipating the judgment of men of superior genius, who must see the numberless faults, and justly despise the unworthy author.—As I intend, in contradiction to his method, to prove what I shall assert, I hope they will forgive me if I only speak to particulars.

I am sorry, my very worthy friend, you could not begin without a fault.

Line 1, *Roscius deceas'd*, &c.

Why here, so please your reverence, you have grossly forgot yourself.

Roscius was a cotemporary with Cicero, and died about seventeen hundred years ago; then what could provoke thee to take no notice of the numberless great performers that have been since that period? This is a tacit confession, that this is either the most *meritorious*, or most *impudent* age that has been since that time; but you seem to speak as if the chair was but just vacant, and bring the members of our stage as the only claimants; and yet but a little farther you make even *them* quit their perfections in their business, to court the assistance of their friends, who cannot have the least interest there. Whereas you know, very wise Sir, that their own merits were alone what they should depend on; a manifest contradiction.

Line



Line 13 and 14 have no connexion, the 13th is obscure; and the five following not only so, but the highest indignity that can be offered to that national glory you so celebrate in another place.

The paragraph immediately following, is not only too trifling for a just and serious piece of criticism, but absolutely contradicts another passage; for where can be the use of *ability to bribe* where the judges will receive no *fees*? Pray, Sir, did you read the piece after you had writ it? Upon my word you should have some friend to correct for you.

As for the king's picture, and tune of roast beef, at best 'tis a piece of mean wit, even beneath the *Rosciad*.

Line 39, Sir, will you do me the favour to inform me what business Smithfield and Southwark Fair have in this poem? You did not mean, as proprietors of these laugh shops, to give the men any claim to the chair: I beg pardon, but I can't find out the design, faith.

But I must confess it is a lucky conceit, of making Wilkinson pour fresh water on Mr. Foote's old tea-leaves.

Line 49, You never were more out in your life: did not you see that *vigorous* was one of the worst words you could find out? The judicious poet would never have given us the idea of *vigorous* to any thing less than mature manhood; but your muse is only a stripling. Here let me beg the *poetica licentia*.

Line

Line 68, Why really, Sir, you must be a great judge of acting, by the choice you would seem to make of one to decide this debate.—You seem here to be very angry that your Friend *Coleman* was not appointed to determine this knotty affair, whose abilities you fancy equally to the task; whereas your favourite, Lloyd was ungenteel enough to dissent so widely in opinion from you, that he thinks Shakespear and Johnson are geniuses only able to go through this grand work: you must certainly entertain no great idea of the two poets you endeavour to celebrate, or an uncommon notion of the prodigious merit of the worthy Mr. *Coleman*. But, as I have before hinted, that I suspected two gentlemen concerned in this work, it is not clear to me but this, and the next panygeric, were wrote by themselves; no persons but themselves could say such things without blushing, except the *Rosciad* *himself*.

Line 135, Here for once be found guilty of modesty, and blush. Pray, was you conscious that your argument was so weak, that you found it absolutely necessary to bring us down a metaphor from scripture to support a piece of fulsome flattery? Besides, a text from holy writ should by no means be introduced into a work of this kind, whose sole intention is ill-nature and defamation: This is a criticism obvious to every body; and it were needless to say more, than that you should have had a greater regard to the sacred writings: every serious man must join with me here,—I too should be unjust, if I pass'd by those two admir-

able



able and truly poetical descriptions of our great masters of dramatic writing; the world must own them equally nervous as elegant: your waking '*memory with a sleepy ode*,' and your picture of order, (whether your own or not does not signify a farthing, as long as we have it) with the whole cavalcade, have peculiar merit; but really do not see what the private fortunes of either of the treasurers have to do here; 'tis poor, 'tis mean, and flying from the matter; nor strictly do I see that the men have any business; nor is it actually poetry, but mad prose.

Line 217, *Havard all serene*, &c.

Pray, dear scurril Sir, what may this be? A criticism! Upon my word you are out a trifle here; why this is most manifest ill nature, without any reason to prove that Mr. Havard cannot feel emotions, nor impart. Not being capable of imparting, may proceed from some defect in nature, but no fault in the man; but even there I shall take the liberty of being of another opinion; for whoever has seen him do any part of tenderness, has felt with him all the sympathetic distress that the author designed his part should express; which amounts to your own proof, that he feels himself. Here you *condemn*, but take no pains to *convince*; and you must have a most consummate share of vanity, when you believe the world will take your bare declaration for the standard of judgment. Mr. Havard might, with more justice, declare you a block-head, and his word would much sooner be taken: not to mention the *cruelty* of the assertion, the *falsehood* is sufficient to condemn

condemn it; every thinking man must abhor you for such a piece of slander: the reputation with which the gentleman has pass'd through life, is an undoubted testimony of the goodness of his heart, and the frequent applause he has received in his public character, will prove how much he deserves as an actor. Come, come, confess your envy, and throw yourself upon the mercy of your judges.

In Mr. Davis, you seem to have err'd no farther, than by mistaking scurrility for wit, and invective for satyr. Pray tell me, did you intend to be smart against Davis, or matrimony? You have left it something doubtful; for if a man is to be criticised on for having a very pretty wife, what contempt does he deserve who has made choice of a very ugly one? So that the state itself is contemptible: rare doctrine! Mr. Parson; but if you mean the merit of the man consists in his having a pretty wife, I believe you will be found to be more out; so that, in reality, 'tis neither wit nor criticism; and I wish, for your own sake, the lines were more poetical, especially that admirable one immediately following:

*And mouths a sentence, as curs mouth a bone.*

Now here, dear Doctor, you must give me leave for laughing in your ugly face, as Mr. Garrick says. Can the mild, the pacific Mr. Davis, for you afterwards celebrate him as such, ever be accused justly of snarling in his part like a butcher's dog? I almost find myself ready to blush for you; but I consider you have



a large stock of those commodities in store, as you do not often make use of any.

Line 225, Pray, dear inconsistent Doctor, what are you at here? Only be pleased to remember, that in one place Garrick and Nature are one; and here you find fault with Mr. Holland, for being so near a copy of nature: from which we may reasonably infer, that you neither know when you are pleased, nor when you judge. Suppose we allow Mr. Garrick to be a most perfect performer, it consequently follows, that if his method is right, Mr. Holland's cannot be wrong. How are you sure that this is not the most indelicate compliment you ever paid your favourite? For surely, if Mr. Garrick has arrived at the first state of excellence, Mr. Holland must have some degree of merit, who is so close an imitator: and while I coincide in opinion, that an actor cannot obtain the highest place in fame, who plays intirely from imitation, it does not follow, that he must be out of his way far, who so justly treads in the path of him who is right. Indeed, you seem to have run on the wrong side of the post in this argument; but pray, what reason had you for leaving out, in this last edition, *the itch of honor*, and *the pox of love*? Was not the verse extreemly harmonious? Was not the expression very delicate? Was not the thought truly just? Or the reflection morally honest? What reason had you for being right? Or who that had read it, found fault with it? Ah! heav'n help your  
E head!

head! Why, 'twas the only stroke of true humour you had; the pox take you for it! You there gave us an opportunity of laughing at you; for you have given us but few to laugh with you. It was very cruel; but I hope you will remember it in the next edition; it will make it worth two shillings.

Line 249, Why could not Lloyd, nor Coleman, see the impropriety of thought? Indeed you are very comical; but very apt to forget yourself: but pray let me ask you, seriously, one question? Is there any criticism pointed out here? What has Mr. King's theatrical merits to do with the matchless impudence of that nation? If Mr. King is very happy (as we believe he is) in the parts he plays, what is it to the public where he got his perfections? Nor do I find, in the course of that paragraph, that you find one real fault with him: you make a most villainous pun at the end; but leave us totally in the dark as to the validity of his pretensions, or your own conclusions, how far he had a right to the claim he would support. This I take to be one amongst the many gross errors that run through the whole performance; you are here stigmatizing a country, that, in a very few lines, you are most lavish in your encomiums on: you praise Mr. King for branding a nation that you thank Mr. Moody for rescuing from abuse. Indeed, for my own part, I must confess, I do not see what you would be saying, nor is it clear to me, that you know yourself; you found it necessary to say something, and (ill natured, if possible) so to it you went, and very wisely found out, that



that it was a crime for an actor to have past some few years in Ireland; where (allowing your assertion for impudence true, which I believe to be very erroneous) he had an opportunity of more readily coming at that blessing, which you have found so absolutely necessary to be possessed of, in order to pass through life. Now pray ask yourself, can you look upon it as a fault in any man, for having a large share of that, which your own heart must know to be your only perfection? or how can you blame a country for dispensing that to her sons, without which you could not live?

I wish you had been a little clearer in the line *Tutor'd by all*, &c. I really do not understand it.

Line 250, This and the following paragraph are equally just and fair criticisms.—All I can say for Mr. Foote is, if he laughs, cries, struts, and scrapes in character, he most certainly is right; but join with you in that elegant, and sensible reflection, which concludes it. Private misfortunes should never be made the subject of public ridicule; nor can there be any thing so truly detestable as mimicry: the man who could be found guilty of exposing a natural imperfection, in a deserving man, should be expunged from society. Now here, Doctor, you have kept up to your text; this is a master-stroke of criticism.

But, Parson, you that are learn'd, and should understand, how came it to pass that you did not see the direct meaning of two lines in the same paragraph? I believe they are thus expressed:

E 2

E'en

*E'en I whom Nature cast in bideous mould,*

*Who having made, she trembled to behold;*

You must give me leave, on account of your profession, to speak very particularly to these lines; for hitherto, Doctor, I have only accused you of being a miserable critic, as I did not apprehend I should have had any opportunity of arraiging you for blasphemy; and in order to prove this, we are to consider *Nature*, in the first line, as *Providence*; you make use of it as *Providence*; you know, as it now stands, it is but another word for *God Almighty*: now in this you are calling *Providence* to an account for having been unkind to you in the formation of your person: that *Nature*, or *God*, had play'd some school-boy's trick, and clapt an owl's head on a man's shoulders. You must remember those days of wantonness, when boys are guilty of turning a piece of clay into a thousand antic forms, the sport of fancy; now, could one of these ugly pieces of mis-shapen mud, think and speak, would it not have more reason to find fault with its maker than you? It would know itself to be the offspring of lewd imagination, created only to raise mirth: now, you must know yourself to be the work of the Divine Nature, who would not wantonly, or in sport, create any being, merely to make them objects of derision. Now, in the case of personal defects, the imperfection brings its effect from some natural cause, that we can always account for; and does not proceed from the *Divine Nature's* moulding us in some testy mood, (as you seem to say it does) for then



then the cause being from him, we could never trace it to its origin, which now the learned sons of Galen and Hypocrates can do with the utmost ease.

*Whom having made she trembled to behold!*

That is, in plain words, that Providence was shocked at a thing of its own creating. Let any thinking man consider this line attentively, and then condemn me, if he can, when I accuse him of blasphemy. Here is he telling us, that Nature (which is God in this place) had dealt so unkindly by him, that he was frightened to look on his own production; this is the absolute meaning of the line, and, I believe, will amount to as absolute blasphemy. There is a line just before that will serve to corroborate this assertion;

*Mimics draw errors out of Nature's Fault,*

Now, here again he is accusing that all perfect *Being*, and whose handy works prove him so, of committing of faults. The term is false; for they are not Nature's faults, but natural misfortunes; and as to the imperfections, they cannot be the dispensations of that all just God, for they are generally contracted at a time when we can have committed no crime to deserve them, which is either in the womb, or in our infancy; and undeserved he would never inflict: but if I know you rightly, you have unjustly called Providence to an account; for I must candidly own, I have often look'd upon those shoulders, and the pedestals you wear for legs, with an eye of envy; and as for that little

natural

natural imperfection in your face, which the faculty call a convulsion on the part, proceeding from some irregularity in the muscles, I have observed with the greatest pity.—I certainly believe this to be the true spirit and meaning of the lines above quoted, and publickly call upon you to contradict yourself, by denying the assertion, and defending this passage: but after this, had thy pen all the merit in the world, such proof placed on thee, would damn thee to everlasting fame.

Line 291, By this I understand, that Mr. Obrian, form'd by nature to please, shews us, in Master Stephen, which way nature grows: upon my word a very pretty compliment. But if you meant the contrary, you should have said, which way nature does not grow; or supplied it with the word *goes*. Now here, Parson, you have puzzled the text again.

Line 308, I here imagine one of the under actors speaking till he comes at the line 311, which should not be marked with the double comma, being a reflection on what has been said;

*Actors unlash'd, themselves may lash mankind;*

why so they may: what is the end of their profession? the business of the stage? or the labour of the performers? Is it not to shew folly to herself? Pray is it their fault if mankind will do absurd things? and is there not great merit in the player, who can happily render these vices ridiculous, and by that means laugh them out of countenance: then certainly they ought not to fall  
under



under the scourge, while they are correcting these errors; unless they do it bunglingly, and then you should speak to them as actors, distinctly, and not as men; but you forget, you confound, and don't seem to know, that whatever praise you bestow on them as men, will not establish their reputation as actors; nor whatever faults you find with them as actors, will never impeach their characters as men.

Line 320, Indeed you do speak very freely; I wish I could say honestly.

Line 325, *Austin would glisten in French Silks.*

His criticism, the man would be well drest. *Mine*, Silks happily rhymes to the next line.

*Ackman would Norris be, and Parker Wilks.*

Well, 'tis already proved, there can be no great harm in imitating men of known abilities.—Was there ever any thing so absurd as the character of Mr. Bransby? not to mention the impropriety of the term *Ludicrous Nature*: was nature ever known to be ludicrous? how is it possible she should be so? Suppose she has been so unkind, as to give this man a hump-back, that a contraction in his face; pray are these infirmities ludicrous; or are they objects of our pity? I believe this will demonstrate, that nature can perform no one ludicrous action; so here, my very good friend, you have only sacrificed perspecuity to laugh: and how is it at all applicable to Mr. Bransby? When a man would aim at being what nature and ability never designed he should

should be, there he is an object of ridicule; but we do not find that any part of this gentleman's character, and must beg some better proof than your saying so.

Line 333, *If I forget thee, Blakes, &c.*

I am at a loss to know whether he is praising, or blaiming, so his satyr has lost its sting, or his praise its end; and cannot help saying, with the man in the play, *indeed, brother, you have a great deal of dark wit.*

Line 341, *Long from a nation, &c.*

Please to observe, that this is the very nation that he has just been abusing himself, he so humbly thanks Mr. Moody for rescuing from abuse. Will you never recollect yourself? how has this country been abused? Indeed we have had a few of its clowns represented upon our stage, where the authors have made them commit laughable blunders; but always have had a strict regard to make them the honestest creatures in the world? For the truth of this I refer you to all the Teagues on the stage; and here we have an Irish gentleman, an honest, sensible, brave man; nay, and modest too, with the true generosity of heart very peculiar to that country: but the author finding it absolutely necessary to mark the character, has here and there given him a seeming mistake. Now, how has this country ever been abused on our stage? I do not recollect one bad character but Foigard; and that is rather a satyr upon the gown, Mr. Parson, than upon the nation. You neither more or less than misplace your sarcasm upon Mr. King;



King, and your encomium on Mr. Moody; for allowing that gentleman all the merit you possibly can, the best you can say is, that he happily hit off that character, that Mr. Macklin so justly had drawn: and as you seem his friend, I wish you would advise him not to mar the character, by introducing his vile Whack; for, to be sure, that song appears very well in the mouth of a baronet, with fifteen hundred per Ann. bred a scholar at home, and polished in the military court of Prussia. Is not the whole character conducted upon this plan? Do, prithee admonish him, and correct thyself.

Line 352, *Nor desires to know?*

And yet she humbly condescends to be perfectly well acquainted through the whole house. This is very gross; for if the muse was not known, or acquainted with them, how could she speak of them? How give any just or determinate recital of them, as they are brought forward to claim the chair? But your plea of having no knowledge, is a good excuse; I readily believe you there, and wish you would learn to point; for certainly the comma at militia has no business there, unless to render it obscure.

Line 359, Well, this is a piece of rare criticism, and absolutely proves what we only before imagined,

*Sparks at his glass, &c.*  
that the gentleman spoke of is, oeconomically right. What did you, in your wise conception, intend to say? You could not mean.  
F to

to praise; no, that is but badly grafted in thy nature; and you could not mean to abuse, by saying that he acts upon settled principles, and that those principles are right. Mr. Sparks ought to return you his public thanks.—Pray, is there any criticism struck out here, unless it be an encomium? That Mr. Smith is genteel, easy, and smart, is universally allowed; and as for his going to school, to say his part, every one will see it a piece of false satyr, without any wit; but allowing it was so, it only proves that Mr. Smith is not too proud to be instructed in the happy art of pleasing, as you do not deny but that he does please; and where you cannot find fault, the world may always give great merit.—Ross, &c. I will confess, might be better than he is: he is undoubtedly possessed of an elegant figure, good understanding, and pleasing voice: these are great abilities, all which he certainly has; and might arrive at a much higher state of perfection, if he would bestow a little pains on his parts; but I must own, I never saw any thing like sleeping, either in him or Mrs. Ward: but I cannot help the drowsiness of your disposition; but all together makes but a puerile criticism; nay, leaving it doubtful whether it is one.—I must candidly own, if there is any sarcasm meant to Mr. Macklin, I do not understand it.

Line 371, Why, in the name of the nine muses what are you at here? This is really a mighty perplexed affair. Are you speaking to Mr. Shuter as actor or man? What has the man to do with an author's leaving out nonsense? Or what has the actor

to



to do with Mr. Shuter's letting fly random bolts of wit? Indeed, Doctor, you are very clever, if a man could find it out; though it is no matter how much more lower you write. *Though levelled in the dark.* Why, if it was levelled in the dark, the wonder would be, if it had hit the mark. This is a terrible mistake; but don't you think the word *but* would have prevented this glaring absurdity? You are very welcome to it. It was not a bad thought to leave out, in this impression, Whitfield and Dawson; for what has Mr. Shuter's private affairs to do with Roscius's chair? But, Doctor, don't you remember, as you have laid it down, you had no right to speak of the members of Covent-Garden theatre; for you declared they declined all pretension to the seat, and were ashamed to lead on their troops. Now, as you had made them modestly forego all claim, you could have no right to find fault with them. Here you have not only been absurd in your criticisms, but wrong in your introduction of the men. Indeed, you have a very bad head, to say nothing of your heart.

Line 407 to 428, Happy enough, and very just.

Line 425, Mrs. Yates certainly merits all your praise; nor is your criticism without foundation. I wish some of the lines were more like poetry.

Next is a real character of Mrs. Cibber; but could not you have introduced that pretty digression better? For now we are led off from the matter, to hear you tell us what you feel when she

plays Alicia. Why, every fool feels with her then : but here we suppose, that lady came in her turn to lay claim to the chair. Now, if you would have so contrived, that Mrs. Cibber might seem to give this as a proof of the justness of her claim, it would have produced a fine effect, and not so vilely have broke the congruity of the poem ; but that you have sacrificed all thro' it.

The next paragraphs are just and fair, I believe.

Line 479, *Pritchard, &c.*

Now, to convince how far he has err'd in his praise on Mr. Coleman and Mrs. Pritchard. Sure never was any thing so inconsistent as the character you have given of this lady : her person, her voice, and understanding, are as unblemished as her fame. That she has all the dignity of majesty, attemper'd with all the graceful charms of ease ; and that her knowledge in her profession is inferior to none ; so far, for once, you have exactly hit the way of speaking truth. But what can excuse thee for that shocking, that indelicate expression you make use of for your foul-mouth'd critic ? Was it to shew, you could not drop yourself, though but for once ? That you could not forget your accustomed ill-nature, even to keep up propriety ? How falsely must your critic judge, or how erroneously you write ? for can she, who is possessed of all the qualifications before recited, justly be accused of either being too fat, or old ? Now, that she has these perfections, you seem convinced, or farther on you would never have been so liberal of your praises. Faith, you may very well say, *Inferior only to the author, &c.* for that gentleman

cannot



cannot sufficiently thank her: he knows that it was through her means, that he had a miserable play greatly saved. It may be asked, why miserable? and as I have laid it down as a maxim, to give a reason to support what I shall assert, I shall begin with Mr. Yates's character: an old debauchee, pimping for his nephew. Mr. Palmer, a sober young fellow, who gives it as a proof of his sobriety, by appearing twice drunk before his mistress, when she had most occasion for him in his perfect senses. Mr. King, a very vile copy of Mr. Macklin's 'squire Groom. Mr. Burton, a sketch of a character not without merit. Mr. O'Brien, mere outlines too, and badly conducted, is guilty of the worst of actions, yet carries it off in triumph, when he ought to be disgraced. Mr. Garrick's inconsistent, but admirably acted. Mr. Ackman's, the best wrote part in the play, because he speaks but one line. And Mr. Moody's, a most miserable character, only foisted in to shew him in an Irishman, and to commit a poor blunder, too bad for an Irish footman, that cannot read, which we must not dare to suppose of a regulating captain. As for Mrs. Pritchard's, 'tis well conducted, till the fourth act, where she should undoubtedly have fainted away; Mr. Oakly should have left her, and then she would have had time to recollect, and see her follies, before the fifth act; her contrition would have been natural, and have made a fine scene, besides preventing that huddle of plot at the last, where the lady recovers the free use of thinking before she has time to recollect herself. Mrs. Clive's, an old bawd of quality: the character (when rightly conducted) whether fit for the stage, or no, is yet doubtful;

doubtful; but should, at all events, have received some punishment at least, whereas she has the laugh against them, like my lord. Miss Pritchard is angry with her lover without cause, and pleased without reason. As for the conducting of the plot, what can be worse? Was there ever any thing so diabolical as the mistake of the letters, and the vile incident of pressing the father and lover? Instead of the plots opening in the fourth act, as it should do, we are kept quite in the dark till the last scene, where it bursts upon us, and is such a patched affair, that he hardly finds time to bring about his grand design. And for language, it is really so poor, so miserable, that 'tis almost beneath criticism. My Lord and the Major speak very little less than downright bawdy; and I do not remember one moral reflection, nor a stroke of just wit, through the whole performance. I know they say 'tis natural; but do we not expect something more in a comedy than mere chit chat and hurry? We were used to be treated, in good Dan. Congreeve's days, with regular conducted business, and the most brilliant flights of real wit; both which we are totally at a loss for.

From this we may gather how far ill-drawn and fancied characters, extreme partiality in the oeconomy of the business, and language void of sentiment and wit, can contribute to make this as bad a play as we have lately seen. Indeed, Mr. Coleman, you must mend your hand; for you may not have the happiness to have the next performed so greatly.

I beg



I beg pardon for this digression, but have already given my reason for it, and now shall proceed with the Rosciad.

Line 539, *Names ne'er design'd.*

Could not you have made use of the vulgar saying, *Not to be mentioned in the same day*, unless when you compare small things with great? for though we allow Mr. Mossop to have a great deal of merit, I think Mr. Barry may stand candidate for the first seat in fame, without even giving offence to *your* Roscius. The next paragraph is very poetical, but not quite so clearly understood as I could wish; I do not see any meaning it has. In the next line, we have another scripture text foisted on us, but on a far worse design: here holy writ is brought down for the most scandalous of purposes; namely, to blast the reputation of a worthy member of society, and render him ridiculous, who was ever an object of our esteem.

Should the holy dictates of God ever be made use of in a contemptuous light? Well may the laity hold them in the utmost derision, when our spiritual guides treat them in the most ludicrous and laughable manner.

We will allow every man to be witty if it is in his power; but will not forgive any for being prophane. Indeed, friend, you have made a confounded blunder here; nor is your character of that gentleman built upon better grounds than your text is applicable; so that all we can say is, that you have been ludicrously prophane, and impiously witty; not to say how unjust in your character.

Why

Why how like a dog that had burnt his tail would you look, if your superiors should take hold of this.

Line 568, You here speak particularly kind, though no more than truth of Mr. Barry. Every one will agree with you, that he is happy in a fine figure: we are convinced too, that his soul is capable of feeling all the convulsive strugglings of the strongest passion. Now, as you generously allow that he can feel himself, according to a declaration of your own, he must make others feel: for if you acknowledge *him* susceptible of the passions, who is possess'd of a graceful person, a strong marking face, and a peculiar musically tun'd voice, it follows that he is capable of dispensing these feelings: you own too that none can give such well applauded tenderness. *Lear*, a part where every passion that can agitate the human breast, are almost all employed at once; yet has this very man the happy art so to divide and separate them, that each shall have the desired effect, and shall insinuate themselves into the very heart of the meanest audience. Pray, what can you mean by finding fault with him, for adapting the finest figure in the world, to present you with the most delightful attitude? Don't you think this a mighty shrewd remark, my dear Sir? And afterwards you contradict yourself, by saying he never knew a feeling that he was not taught; now, this is acknowledging he has arrived at the happy science of feeling, if I may be allowed the term; but naturalists will tell you there is no such thing as being taught to feel; that it must be such passion actuating upon

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the soul that can produce such sensations: now this must be beyond the reach of art or teaching; and if he who feels himself, can make others feel, it matters not by what means.

*He conn'd, &c.*

That is, he took great pains to be right: if there be any fault in that, your favourite, (or I am misinformed) has taken more pains than any of them, by which he has gain'd the high state he now possesses. Are you convinc'd that you have been wrong here?

*Line 568, Mr. Quin, &c.*

Here is a name brought to public ridicule, that never should be made use of but with respect; as we owe his memory the sincerest reverence, having conferred the greatest honour on our stage; but let his merits or his faults be what they may, they ought by no means to have been introduced here, having long since resigned all pretensions to the chair of Roscius, in the very meridian of praise, at a time of life when he was most calculated by nature, and experience, to bestow that satisfaction in his peculiar cast of parts, which has not been in the power of any performer since him to give us: and here are you disturbing the manes of his theatrical reputation; and in your opinion (in a manner very peculiar to yourself) condemning of him after he had pass'd the examination of the strictest court, and been honourably acquitted by the severest judges of the stage. I believe there is not a lover of theatrical amusements that is above forty, that I may not appeal to on this

occasion: if I am not much mistaken, the greatest fault this worthy gentleman finds with this favourite actor, is a sameness. Now, to contradict you at once, let me ask you, and those who remember him, if his declamation in Cato was like his droll humour in Falstaff? Was his Othello like his Old Batchelor? Was his Brutus like his Fryar? Now, the plain question to be ask'd is, Could there be a sameness in him, who could so vary himself as to be equally great and pleasing in the Duke in Measure for Measure, and Sir John Brute? Who could so enter into every Part, as entirely to possess himself of it, and make us happy in the performance? Nor did we find any want of a performer in any one of his parts while we had him, as we have not seen them supply'd with the least advantage. I hope, gentlemen, you will forgive me for being thus tedious, as you will see it's an indispensable duty on me to defend this character: *I know you grey-bearded Veterans, who lov'd his cause* (which grey-bearded Veterans is a rank tautology, for they could not well be Veterans without being grey-bearded) will join with me, that he should, at all events, leave him at peace in *his* love seat, *his* Sabine fields, contenting himself with being obscurely great in rural life, well knowing that

*When vice prevails, and impious men bear sway,*

*The post of honour is a private station.*

From what has been said, the world will see his criticism as false as the introduction of the character was wrong; will see it brought in only to vent his own spleen; for he openly confesses he pleased our fathers; that they gave him great merit, and thought him

*then*



then what his Roscius is now. Then why will you, my dear shame-  
 fac'd Doctor, plant your very simple opinion in direct opposition  
 to all they were ever pleas'd with, and openly declare yourself  
 in immediate possession of more understanding than your father  
 had? though 'tis possible he had as strong natural parts as his  
 son, with a judgment confirmed by threescore years experience:  
 but this is not the only proof of your consummate modesty, and  
 would alone serve to invalidate your criticism.—Methinks I see  
 Mr. Quin meeting one of his acquaintance.—Good morning Mr.  
 Quin, what is the matter? You look as if you were not well.—  
 Well! no, I have got the gripes.—The gripes, with what, Sir?  
 With what? why I have taken a d—nd large dose of the Rosciad  
 this morning: I wish I could meet with the author, that I might  
 have something ready to wipe my \*\*\*\* (dear Mr. Shandy excuse  
 me, I could not do without your four stars, and preserve any of  
 that decency you so recommend.) But why, Mr. Quin, must  
 you make use of the man; could you not have taken his piece?—  
 His piece, no, d—my, Sir, that is foul paper already.

*Sheridan a doubtful name, &c.*

Here he owns that this gentleman's character is yet unfixed in the  
 records of fame; yet is he proceeding in his old way, forgetting the  
 duty he owes men of genius, and rudely stepping in with his opinion  
 before they have had time enough to consider the cause duly.

In the next paragraph he confesses his conceptions are just,  
 natural, and great; his feelings strong, and words so

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well

well enforced that Quin would envy; yet has nature been so niggard of her favours, that she has denied him the powers of voice and face: only take notice of this.

Line 676, *Passions like Chaos in confusion lie,*

That he feels all the real emotions of passion, but has not the faculties to mark one. In the next, his voice is either irregularly deep, or inharmoniously shrill, two extremes;

*Like man and wife,*

*Coupled together for the sake of strife.*

Now, here is another palpable stroke at matrimony: besides, what are we to understand by the simile? For how a scolding man and wife can be like Mr. Sheridan's voice, is not quite so clear to me; find it out, those that can conceive better. But why, my dear Sir, are man and wife coupled together only for the sake of strife? Don't you think we have an infinite deal to thank the legislator for; it was not quite so considerate, or kind, to institute a ceremony merely to make two people miserable. I hope you do not experience its cruelty at home, with the soft object of your conjugal desires. Dear Parson, have some mercy on poor matrimony.—But to return; in the following paragraph you say, his acting is too much, and give it as proof, that in the heat of his impatience he falls three paces back, and then returns his lost three paces; his right leg moves in motion semi-circular; and that he hurls, like the Nailor, the close-clench'd fist at poor Mr. Davis.

An elegant simile, and a pretty sort of a line! faith.

The following two lines are beneath all criticism,

698, *Whilst in his own contending passions roll.*

If



If I do not forget, you have just been exclaiming against him, asserting that nature had denied him the kind powers of conveying the passions; and here you celebrate him, as displaying all the contending tumults that can wrack the soul. Now the plain question is, my dear accurate Sir, Can he, or can he not feel and make others feel? Or if he did not, how could you find out he had these passions? Is not this self evident?

Line 701, 702. The justest compliment in the world. But I would ask this profound critick, if it is Nature's fault that he falls three paces back? Is it Nature's fault, that he throws his arms like a Nailor? Is it Nature's fault that his right leg moves in motion semi-circular? Now can you answer this? Must I for ever call upon you to remember? I hold two to one now, that you have taken a large draught of Mr. Garrick's Lethe; he very well knows that any liquor is pacific against memory, provided it be taken in quantity; and I believe you are a good honest soul, you won't baulk your glass. Pray, Parson, but pray do, when you are quite cool, consider this passage attentively; it does not signify how more just and poetical you make it, for *flir* and *lar* do not rhyme the best in the world; and don't mistake dirty wit for honest satyr.—Lastly, Mr. Garrick, the universal reputation he has gained amongst the most competent judges, would render it absolute impudence in me to endeavour to take from it. I believe him to be a very excellent performer, but not without his errors; and I wish you had found out some few, then we should not have all

all this reason to suspect thy fulsome praise, to be neither more nor less than downright flattery, made use of for some servile purpose; but there can be no doubt, but that Gentleman has discernment enough, to see thro' so mean an artifice.

Thus far I have proceeded to endeavour to shew how far he had any real claim to the character of critic; and now shall leave it to be decided by men of judgment. I have only taken the liberty to give my own reasons why he is not one. I must conclude, by making a serious application to the town, on a subject which I only intended to treat ludicrously: my whole design at first, was rather to raise the just contempt that such authors deserve, than to pay that sacrifice to their vanity, that making a moral answer would; but I find so many reasons for altering that plan, that I hope they will forgive me, for not endeavouring to keep up the laugh any longer than was necessary. Duty and inclinations now call upon me, to forget I once treated him as a bad author, to speak to him now as a worse man.—Borne away with the stream of folly, and ill-nature, the smile may circulate for him; but let candour once consider the motive, that it is raised at the expence of humanity; that we give up our judgment to indulge our spleen; that we are striking at the root of our own happiness, when we find fault with what gives us pleasure; and all this to gratify the rancour of him, whose heart is as black as his Gown.—I believe it would stagger him to prove he had one moral or good design in this publication; I must own I cannot

find



find it out; but on the contrary, I see malice, envy, and fulsome flattery, are the only goals pointed at, the only paths pursued, the only ends desired. Place it in another light, and suppose, wretchedness and want, being the parents of invention, had drove him upon this plan; could he not have been ingenuous, and while he played the critic, could he not have maintained the man? His first design would have been answered, for the piece would have sold as well, and would have bought him praise, as well as bread. But his views seem all to centre in the worst of purposes, arrogance, and pride; this it must be granted, looks like his intention. The dispassionate man will see at one glance the priest prophaning the sacred word of God, will find him drawing down from scripture a conceited laugh, to support a ludicrous hypothesis; will see him forsaking the grand work of dispensing mutual harmony and universal concord amongst mankind, to sow dissention, to blast reputation, and totally destroy the welfare of an harmless brother of society, whose only fault is, his not being able to be more than he can be. Religion, charity, beneficent love, themes for a holy pen to write on, surely cannot be below his consideration; yet these he forsakes for calumny, detraction and lies: no longer reflects upon his sacred oath, and divine function, but as trifles; and impiously daring, leaves them, to become a vile satyrist.

Now let me appeal to you, you worthy sons of piety, to you whose private characters as men, well become the sacred robes you wear, as ministers of our holy christian religion; to you  
whose

whose pious lives reflect an honour on the most honourable profession; to you who zealous in the cause and propagation of those divine principles, which tend to dispense universal happiness in this world, and everlasting glory in the next; who devote the night to meditation, and the day to prayer; who give up the pomps and luxuries of life to assist mankind in the great road of salvation; with what indignation must you look upon this man? Can you own him for a brother of your divine order, who could forsake his post as captain under Christ, to become the foulest of calumniators; who could forsake every duty, and actually be the wolf in sheep's cloathing? What will the world think of our school of faith, when such as he are our preceptors? Should the holy fur screen him, whose actions are a scandal to it? Let us hope there lives not another of so malignant a cast; if their does, may the wish of a late Worthy divine be his portion. May penury and want stare him in the face; may shame and reproach pursue him; may the stings of a guilty conscience wake in the morning, and remorse haunt him all the day; may his friends forsake him, and his acquaintance scorn him; may he become an alien among mankind, and deserted by society; and thus hated may he live long enough to repent.

Farewell and pray for me.

F I N I S.



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